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Medication Safety Alert

May, 19th, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Gardner Public Schools is discontinuing the use of over-the-counter benzocaine in students. Over-the-counter benzocaine was included in our over the counter form for 2010-2011 and could be administered with parental signature and consent.

The Federal Drug and Safety Administration (FDA) has issued a safety announcement for over-the-counter (OTC) gels and liquids applied to the gums or mouth to reduce pain. The main ingredient in these medications is **benzocaine**. The FDA is stating that the use of benzocaine has been associated with a rare, but serious, condition called methemoglobinemia. Methemoglobinemia results in a reduction in the amount of oxygen carried through the blood stream and can result in death.

Some brand names of benzocaine gels are **Anbesol, Hurrricane, Orajel, Baby Orajel, and Orabase**. There are generic store brands of benzocaine gels as well. Benzocaine is also sold in the form of lozenges and spray solutions. All of these products are used to relieve mouth pain due to teething, canker sores, and irritation of the mouth and/or gums.

Labels of benzocaines currently in stores do not contain warnings about the risk of methemoglobinemia.

Benzocaine products including teething gels should not be used on children less than two years of age except under the advice and supervision of the child's physician.

Other methods for teething pain that are advised by the American Academy of Pediatrics are: 1. give the child a teething ring chilled in the refrigerator or 2. gently rub or massage the child's gums with your finger to relieve the symptoms of teething in children. Please keep benzocaine as well as any medications out of the reach of children.

The FDA is also advising that adult consumers should talk to their physician before using any benzocaine products as there have been cases of the methemoglobinemia in adults after using benzocaine as well.

For more information please go to www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch. To report side effects please go to MedWatch Online. Report any serious side effects after using benzocaine to the FDA via 1-800-332-1088

See reverse side for a list of Benzocaine Products

Sincerely,
Rebecca A Johnson, RN BSN, School Nurse Leader

List of OTC Benzocaine Products*

Americaine	Dent's Maxi-Strength Toothache	Orajel Medicated Toothache
Americaine Hemorrhoidal	Dermoplast Antibacterial	Orajel Mouth Sore
Anbesol	Dermoplast Painrelieving	Orajel Multi-Action Cold Sore
Anbesol Baby	Detane	Orajel PM
Anbesol Cold Sore Therapy	Dry Socket Remedy	Orajel Ultra Mouth Sore
Anbesol Jr.	Exactacain	Oticaine
Anbesol Maximum Strength	Foille	Otocain
Baby Orajel	Freez Eez	Outgro
Banadyne	HDA Toothache	Red Cross Canker Sore
Benzocaine Burn Spray	Hurricane	Rid-A-Pain Dental Drops
Benzodent	Ivy-Rid	Skeeter Stik
Boil Ease Maximum Strength	Kanka Soft Brush	Sting-Kill
Cepacol Sore Throat	Lanacane	Tanac
Cetacaine	Lanacane Maximum Strength	Thorets
Chiggerex	Mycinettes	Topicale Xtra
Chiggertox	Navogan	Trocaine
Comfort Caine	Orabase with Benzocaine	Walgreens Oral Anesthetic Paste
Dentapaine	Orajel Denture Plus	Walgreens Zilactin-B
Dent's Extra Strength Toothache	Orajel Maximum Strength	Zilactin Toothache and Gum Pain

****This list is not all-inclusive***